

Members of the Education Committee,

I wish to extend my gratitude to the Education Committee for the opportunity to present testimony in the matter of HB6493. I regret that I could not be there personally to advocate for our Town and our students. Scotland, CT has been my official residence for my entire life. I have been active in educational politics for the last decade after being raised and educated in the turmoil that is our Region #11. I chaired the Scotland Withdrawal Committee and currently Chair the Scotland Board of Education. Along with others I have struggled to improve the educational system of our students and to fulfill the State mandates regarding education. The Scotland Withdrawal Study, completed in Dec 2006, measured our Regional High School to the State mandates and to its original justification for establishment. The Committee concluded that it came up woefully short on both comparisons. The Town voted to withdraw to no avail due to current statutes. The Town's quip became "there are 3 certainties in life: death, taxes and regionalization.

Additionally, since 2006 the State BOE has endorsed a policy of school choice that is nearly impossible for us to achieve in our current arrangement where a woefully small school and its accompanying limited curriculum steadily increase its stranglehold on students who seek other options. The result in Scotland is a 25% rate of enrollment at technical schools compared to a consistent statewide rate of 1.8% and a 15% rate of enrollment in Vo-Ag programs compared to a 3-4% rate among neighboring towns. The rate of choosing away from our local high school threatens to become an issue of classism as well with the most achieved students going to private schools. For years we topped the charts in drop out rates for our DRG. Others may speak to recent improvements. One year does not a trend make and in Scotland BOE's recent survey among parents, 65% did not want their children to attend the local high school. Two of the 3 local elementary schools are hemorrhaging students—having lost a combined 120 students in the past several years. This is the result I would most like to prevent in Scotland.

I am currently serving on the Dissolution Committee. The proposed legislation before you brings renewed optimism to a process that is like no other in my experience. The 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution provides for equality amongst people regarding votes. The current CT statute appears to violate that right in that one town, hypothetically even one voter, could carry a decision against a majority in 2 towns. I am sorry to miss the testimony today, particularly that of those who would oppose this correction to the democratic process. Certainly tyranny does support continued oppression but with what moral argument? The only criticism that I can see is that it is a small step to slay the albatross that is Regionalization, but that small step is VERY important to our current situation in Scotland. I respectfully encourage the Committee members to support HB6493 and to continue to make corrective efforts that extend the improvements of cooperative arrangements to those who made errant decisions 40 years ago.

Gale Lockland, PhD Scotland, Ct